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Exiles of anger: the spatial politics of difficult emotions in contemporary education

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Abstract

Anger is an under-examined yet potent and disruptive emotion with a complex social and spatial history. This paper examines the spatial politics of anger as it emerges in contemporary secondary education, arguing that everyday experience of young people is at odds with tools of emotional governance that are widely practiced across the sector. State education in the UK has increasingly turned to social and emotional forms of learning to both broaden the range of skills taught and to encourage different forms of self-governance. By exploring the operation of this particularly resonant and volatile emotion, the paper attempts to go beyond the intentions of policy to examine the everyday presentation of emotions through the bodies and spaces of governance. Specifically, I draw on young people's experience of anger and examine the individual and institutional responses that position and shape their emotional geographies. I argue that rather than treating emotions in their generality, examining anger specifically reveals a spatiality based on exile and eradication, rather than internal psychological governance.

Key words: Anger, emotions, spatiality, young people, governance, displacement

Declarations of Interest: None

Introduction

“Anger should be a great and diffused power in life, making it strenuous, giving zest and power to the struggle for survival and mounting to righteous indignation. Its culture requires proper selection of objects and great transformation, but never extermination”.

(G. Stanley Hall, 1904, V1, p. 355)

“There is no emotion about which we fret, amid greater confusion, than anger.”

Stearns and Stearns, 1986, p. 2)

Of all the emotions that flow within and between us, and forge our identities and relations with other people and places, few are as potent as anger. Yet, geographers have had relatively little to say about it. Some notable exceptions examine this neglect in the context of cultivating and acknowledging the efficacy of anger in the service of social justice (see Henderson, 2008; Brown and Pickerill, 2009; Wright, 2010); in the main, however, studies of anger have been left to social psychology, neuroscience, business and cultural studies. Henderson (2008), writing in the inaugural issue of this journal, suggests that this has less to do with the particularity of anger, and more to do with the fact that emotional geographies have tended to either isolate specific emotions in particular times and places or generalise their affect to the extent that they become amorphous and constant. In either case, there is a neglect of the spatialized and historicised context of emotional experience. While this has been partially attended to over the past decade, with a proliferation of work on specific emotions that combine the study of a named emotion with its affective dimension, (for examples see Johansen, 2015; Rooney, 2015; Ansaloni and Tedeschi 2016; Maddrell, 2016; Ural, 2017) geographers have yet to consider the potential of anger to shape our geographical experience. Given that anger is profoundly implicated in the exercise of power, both through direct and indirect means, this neglect is significant.

In this paper, I make the case for a close reading of the operation of anger in the context of social and emotional education in order to explore how it is produced, policed, corralled and displaced in ways that attend to the simultaneously contingent spatiality of emotions and its powerful resonance. This builds on recent work in geography which examines the implications of what happens when emotions become coopted and entangled with policy, particularly education. As Jupp, Pykett, and Smith (2017, p.3) suggest, in the introduction to their edited volume on *Emotional States*, there is much to be considered in “how emotions create and sustain new relationships of power and modes of governing, but also how they disrupt governance regimes, surface in unexpected ways and places, generate new identifications and solidarities, and perhaps shift policy and politics”. By exploring the operation of a particularly resonant and volatile emotion, this paper attempts to go beyond the intentions of policy to examine the everyday movement of feelings through the bodies and spaces of governance. Specifically, I draw on young people’s experiences of anger in contemporary schooling and examine the individual and institutional responses that position and shape their emotional geographies. I argue that rather than treating emotions in their generality, examining anger specifically reveals a spatiality based on exile and eradication. This goes against Hochschild’s (1983) principle of ‘emotion work’ in which late-twentieth-century capitalist society demands emotions are worked on and into productive performances. Rather, I suggest here that anger stands out among other emotions for its confinement and removal, *despite* what might be suggested in education policy. The paper begins by situating the discussion in current emotional geographies, focussing particularly on the emerging literature on emotional geographies of education. This is followed by a discussion of the socio-historical context of anger and the emergence new forms of social and emotional management in contemporary education. I then present an example of the way anger emerges in young people’s experience of secondary education.

The data are drawn from a study of emotional education as it is taught in the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Curriculum in a large 11-18 community comprehensive school in the North of

England. The study involved interviews and focus group work with 17 students in years 9, 10 and 11, with both parent and student consent, and two Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) teachers responsible for teaching the SEAL curriculum. The interview work followed a period observing the implementation of the SEAL curriculum across the Education Authority. During this time, I attended training workshops and met regularly with the Education and Learning Consultant who was employed by the authority to deliver SEAL training and develop the curriculum. During the phased rollout of the SEAL programme, a number of schools emerged as SEAL champions, standing out as enthusiastic adopters of the SEAL materials and curriculum. The school for this study was selected from one of these flagship schools, and so represents a more zealous adopter of the programme. The main purpose of the school-based study was to understand how the SEAL programme was implemented, including how young people experienced emotions in the classroom and how they engaged with the emotional education curriculum.

No place for emotion?

The history of education is often told as one in which emotion is constantly subdued, evacuated or transformed into something else. Rationality is the prevailing epistemology and rational subjects are the desired outcome. Just as Foucault (1978) demonstrated in the *History of Sexuality*, the repressive hypothesis hides a forceful and productive process through which sexuality was actively produced, so too, the history of rationality in education hides a complex process of correcting, coercing and shaping emotionality through schooling. As Lutz (2008, p.64-65) writes, “[b]oth emotionality and sexuality are domains whose understanding is dominated by a biomedical mode; both are seen as universal, natural impulses; both are talked about as existing in ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ forms; and both have come under the control of a medical or quasi-medical profession (principally psychiatry and psychology)”. This framework has given rise to an account of emotions in education as something that has been subdued and transformed; simultaneously coerced and produced rather than repressed. Davies (1996, p.525)

astutely refers to this as education's "docile bodies and disembodied minds", referring to the tendency in education to treat its subjects as Cartesian learners who can be schooled from the neck up. Other authors have taken a different approach, acknowledging the simultaneously embedded nature of emotions in education while acknowledging the continuous effort to deny them (Boler, 1999). Similarly, Walkerdine (1988; 1990) and Youdell (2006; 2011) have shown the powerful ways in which identity and inequality combine with emotional experience to disempower socially marginal groups through the structures and systems of education.

More recently, the argument that emotions have been expelled from education no longer sits comfortably alongside the growing trend for more explicit and active programmes in emotional education. For some, this turn has been the subject of scornful critique. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) and Furedi (2003) are deeply troubled by the trend in Western education to bring therapeutic and psychological models of learning into the curriculum (see Nolan (1998) for US example). Plotting the steady rise of a therapeutic ethos in education and beyond, they are pessimistic about its effects. Far from producing more confident and well-rounded individuals, they argue that therapeutic models create a narrative of victimhood that reduces rather than improves resilience and threatens to create a generation ridden with passive enfeeblement.

In geography, the role of emotions in education has been slower to emerge. While geographies of education has grown into a thriving subfield (see Holloway et al, 2010; Holloway et al, 2011; and Holloway and Jöns, 2012), there have been fewer examples of work that examines the intricate workings of emotion, education and spatiality. Two obvious exceptions to this are the a special issue of *Social and Cultural Geographies* (Cook and Hemming, 2011) which focus on the relationship between embodiment and spatiality in education and a Special issue of *Cultural Geographies* (Mills and Kraftl, 2015) on cultural perspectives on education. Beyond these examples, there is a growing subfield on geographies of education which pays closer attention to the cultural and emotional elements of schooling (for example,

Holt, 2007; Holt, Lea and Bowlby, 2012; Holt, Bowlby and Lea, 2013; Kraftl and Blazek, 2015; Worth, 2012; Thomas, 2011). The most explicit contribution to date comes from Kenway and Youdell's (2011) Special Issue of this journal on emotional geographies of education. This represents the first collective attempt to examine "how emotion circulates in education; and how emotion is both produced in and constitutive of particular spaces and in relation to various scales" (Kenway and Youdell, 2011, p. 132).

It seems that emotions are everywhere. They are ever-present in education; they are the subject of an ever-expanding range of geographical enquiry; they increasingly form the basis of the way we are governed and we are increasingly governed through them. Much of the work which examines the operation of emotions through governing and identity draws heavily on the framework established by Hochschild (1986). She developed two key theoretical ideas. First, 'emotion work' describes the ways in which individuals are encouraged to shape a particular emotional performance that will generally be of social and economic benefit. It is different from suppression or control in that rather than preventing the feeling, such work attempts to refashion it on a deep level. The second principle is 'feeling rules' which are the social guidelines that direct how we feel and how we want to feel. Underlying Hochschild's (1986) work is a Foucauldian belief in the productive force of epistemological regimes, in that the rules of governance shape rather than stifle. If we apply the idea of feeling rules to social spaces, in particular education spaces, there is ample evidence to demonstrate a new set of emotional guidelines which shape the performance of emotions in school and other spaces of governance in the twenty-first century.

To leave the analysis at the level of policy, however, would be to confirm Henderson's (2008) concern that emotions research does not engage adequately with the specificity of particular emotions.

Focussing on the SEAL policy, for example, gives the impression that emotions education is both widespread and effective, and emotional expression is both invited and policed. At this level of generality, emotions are everywhere and emotionality becomes almost a state in itself. I suggest below,

however, that the specificity of emotion matters deeply in the practice of governance. Indeed, in practice, there is a profound rupturing between policy and experience. This calls to mind Mitchell's (2006, p.390) appeal for more work on education and governmentality that digs down into that experience: "We need to conduct more excavations of the extension of neoliberal governmentality in multiple, evolving forms and sites and from both 'top-down' perspectives and so-called 'bottom-up' realms". By turning to the specificity of anger in schools and the way young people's anger is directed, I suggest that there is a different story to tell about the spatiality of emotions in education. Where policies and curricular on emotions offer opportunities for self-government – working on the emotional self in a variety of transformative ways – on close examination, the experience of young people suggests that such policies are not always enacted. Rather, the experience of anger in schools is one of *exile* and *extinction* rather than *transformation*. The removal of anger from the classroom points to a spatiality of emotions in which the classroom is constructed as much by what is removed as that which is shaped within it.

Anger and the rise of emotions education

Despite its neurological and sensory character, the way anger has been tolerated, cultivated and governed, has changed significantly over the past three hundred years. From the mid-eighteenth century, Stearns and Stearns (1986) describe the steady imposition of spatial limits on the display of anger. To begin with, taboos developed around anger in the domestic context, with a growing disapproval of anger as an expressive device within the family. By the nineteenth century, parameters had been more clearly established and were policed by public debates around child rearing practice. From the 1920s onwards, the discourse of anger management migrates beyond the private sphere to the work place, establishing the twentieth century as a key moment in the development of psychological governance as a tool of the state (Rose, 1998; 1999). Where the twentieth century saw emotional expression loosen in domestic and workplace contexts, in schools it remained tightly constrained. It is

not until the 1990s that we see a new era in emotional management, particularly concerning the control of anger (Stearns and Stearns, 1986).

Daniel Goleman's (1995) influential book on emotional intelligence captures an emerging zeitgeist in education which focuses attention away from cognition and attainment and towards social and emotional behaviour, and in particular, anger. In a shift away from more authoritarian behavioural controls, new strategies focused on emotional regulation stress the importance of teaching "ways of regulating and managing anger effectively" (Furlong and Smith, 1998, p. 202). This has been pursued by geographers in a number of studies that explore the implications of increasing attendance to emotions in the classroom, noting the ways in which the shift from managing behaviour to managing the constitution of the feeling itself has implications for the governance of identity and inequalities felt by those with social and emotional differences (Harden, 2012; XXXXX, 2015; Holt, Lea and Bowlby, 2013).

Whether the increased attention devoted to emotions in schooling is seen as part of a therapeutic turn (Ferudi, 2003; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009) or whether it is positioned as part of a broader shift towards neuroscientific governing (Pykett, 2015; Whitehead et al, 2017), there is consensus that education has widened its remit to include the teaching of social and emotional skills. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009, p.ix) describe this change as being undergirded by a powerful combination of government policy, academic research and commercial industry, which have collectively supported "a deluge of interventions throughout the education system [to] assess the emotional needs and perceived emotional vulnerability of children, young people and adults and claim to develop their emotional literacy and well-being". Some of these have been quite piecemeal, emerging in a variegated pattern of local implementation, including nurture programmes, peer mentoring and buddy schemes, drama workshops to facilitate transition from primary to secondary school and the more wide ranging use of circle time to foster quasi-therapeutic talking time. More systematically, the government introduced a nationwide programme of emotional literacy first for primary schools, in 2005, and extended to

secondary schools in 2007, entitled Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).¹ The guidelines and lesson plans draw heavily on Daniel Goleman's (1995) popular book on emotional intelligence.

Goleman's (1995) book has become a significant force in education in both the UK and the US, promoting the idea that traditional measures of intelligence are both inaccurate and misguided in their focus on cognition. Rather, Goleman argues that emotional intelligence, defined as self-awareness, motivation, impulse control, social skills, and empathy, holds far more promise.

The SEAL programme uses Goleman's aptitudes for living as the basis of its curriculum, identifying self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills as the five domains it seeks to improve. In the introduction to the SEAL documentation for secondary schools (DfES 2007, p.4), the guidelines state: "Social and emotional skills are the skills of making positive relationships with other people, of understanding and managing ourselves and our emotions, thoughts and behaviours. If people have these skills they can then understand and respond to the emotions and behaviours of others in ways that are in the best long-term interest of themselves and others". A significant part of the curriculum is focused on: managing feelings. This is defined as "how we express emotions, coping with and changing difficult and uncomfortable feelings, and increasing and enhancing positive and pleasant feelings. As we will see below, the most visible target for this element of the SEAL programme is what Goleman (1995, p.xiii) calls the most 'toxic emotion': anger.

Much of the commentary on the rise of emotional education (e.g. Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009) is suggestive of Bohemian schools, busying themselves with drama workshops and building nurture cabins. There is an almost seductive impression of schools inviting emotional expression and allowing for a more permissive emotional environment. The reality, however, has been far from this. The

¹ Humphry et al (2010) report that by 2010 90% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools had adopted the SEAL programme. Funding for the programme was subsequently cut by the coalition government in 2011, but many of the SEAL documents and strategies continue to be used today.

programmatic nature of government interventions in social and emotional education renders the management of emotions tighter and rather than looser. The role of SEAL in schools has been widely recognised as a new form of emotional governance, providing, as it does, a toolkit for instilling self-governing practices in young people (XXXX 2015, Gillies, 2011; Lea, Holt, and Bowlby, 2017). Rather than focus broadly on the techniques of emotional management, however, I turn now to the specific treatment of anger, how young people report their experiences of feeling anger, and the institutional responses to its expression.

One of the core goals of the SEAL programme is to “manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety” (DfSE, 2007, Guidance Booklet, p.5). In the context of emotional education curricula, this intervention is justified in light of Goleman’s popular psychological premise that anger is bad for health, on a par with smoking in terms of its health risks. Responding in part to a backlash against a move in the 1960s and 70s to celebrate the potential cathartic benefits of ventilating anger, Goleman (1995, p. 59) write that “anger is the most seductive of the negative emotions; the self-righteous inner monologue that propels it along fills the mind with the most convincing arguments for venting rage. Unlike sadness, anger is energizing, even exhilarating. Anger’s seductive, persuasive power may in itself explain why some views about it are so common: that anger is uncontrollable, or that, at any rate, it should not be controlled, and that venting anger in ‘catharsis’ is all to the good”. In contrast, Goleman holds that “anger can be prevented entirely” (Ibid). Indeed, this is the tenor of SEAL work. The focus is on recognising and extinguishing anger. However, what we see in practice is a school culture in which this frequently fails. The imperative then becomes a geographical one, to relocate anger beyond the classroom.

As much as we can map the evolution of social attitudes towards anger at the level of cultural generality, there are, of course, important nuances that construct anger along specific gendered, racialized and class lines. There are what Shields (1999) calls ‘bedrock truisms’ regarding the relationship

between gender and emotions that are far from 'true' but nevertheless shape our understanding of emotional behaviour in often unchallenged ways. The presumption of anger as a peculiarly male prerogative, and sadness as the equivalent female emotion, is one such bedrock belief that goes to the very heart of why anger is an emotion so profoundly invested with power. Where "power is the ability to get what you want; anger is the means to exercise power when faced with the loss of or the threat of losing what you have" (Shields, 1999, p. 140). What kind of power plays are invoked when anger is marshalled and what kind of opportunities are removed when anger is denied or defused? Shields (1999) demonstrates, for example, that anger is strongly related to a sense of entitlement. If girls are raised with a lower sense of entitlement than boys, they are less likely to feel anger when they fail to achieve their potential; "the difference lies largely in what woman and men believe they are due" (Shields, 1999, p. 149). For this reason, reclaiming anger has been central to the feminist movement, the civil rights movements, and indeed, class struggle, vitalising politics precisely because it is an emotion associated with injustice and a renewed sense of self (Lorde, 1984; Frye, 1983). Indeed, both Henderson (2011) and Wright (2010) argue that a revitalised sense of anger is necessary in order to enliven emotional geographies with a progressive sense of social justice.

The relationship between anger and identity is a rich and important line of enquiry with the potential to disrupt inequalities and entitlements. There were evident differences in the way anger was felt and utilised among the young people who participated in this study, with gender in particular refracting the way anger was interpreted and the strategic choices made by individuals in terms of how anger might be used. As Shields (1999, p. 165) notes, "when anger is practiced by the 'wrong' person (the female, the child, someone of another race), the rules for appropriate expression shift". While there is further necessary work to be done examining the ways in which anger is shaped and felt according to social identity, I focus here on the common experience of young people in schools, rather than its variance. Without exception, all the young people I talked to experienced having their anger either forcibly

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removed or displaced from the classroom, or practiced their own self-censure and deferral of anger to another time or location. It is this particular experience of emotional exile that I focus on here for what it can tell us about the way anger is felt and shaped geographically. In the remainder of this paper, I turn to the classroom as a site through which anger is experienced, spatialized and policed.

Where anger fears to tread

Despite recent shifts towards therapeutic models of education with an emphasis on the centrality of emotions to learning, schools still rely heavily on discipline and hierarchy to deliver the curriculum and structure the school day. Behaviour management remains a high priority, and often sits uneasily alongside the new therapeutic ethos. The suite of emotions that are acknowledged and fostered in social and emotional education programmes is therefore tightly circumscribed. Positive emotions are welcome. So called 'toxic' emotions, are not. As an emotion which is potentially disruptive and challenging to the balance of power within the school hierarchy, it is perhaps unsurprising that anger has been singled out as an emotion which is neither tolerated nor seen as helpful in the production of biddable citizens.

Among the repertoire of tools promoted in the SEAL resources, are lessons on identifying feelings and then learning to manage them. The overview of the curriculum guide states that it is designed to "encourage pupils to become more aware of how they are feeling; express their emotions more richly and fully, through their words, faces, voices, tone and body language; gain strategies for managing their feelings; and use this understanding to behave more appropriately" (DfSE, 2007, theme 4, year 7, p.5). The first three exercises are designed to encourage young people to "know and accept what I am feeling", "use a range of words to describe these basic emotions" and "understand the importance of feelings in shaping my behaviour" (Ibid, p.7). The final exercise in this block is entitled 'Feelings detective' and asks pupils to identify where feelings can be sensed and which bodily sensations are

associated with which emotions. The overall learning outcome, however, is that “I know and accept what I am feeling, and can label my feelings” (Ibid, p. 12). While emotions in general appear to be encouraged and accepted, the next exercise suggests that there is a more varied and targeted approach to specific emotions like anger. The exercise entitled ‘Shift that mood’ contains strategies specifically designed to alter the emotional experience that has been identified as negative. This next series of tools are focused on identifying and managing difficult feelings, culminating in strategies designed to calm down in the event that negative feelings take over completely, known colloquially as ‘losing it’. This refers to the kind of explosive anger that is impulsive and raw and is not tolerated as classroom behaviour. Pupils are guided through various techniques including counting, breathing and relaxation and visualisation, for example “counting to six; deep steady breathing; thinking calm thoughts; looking out of the window; visualising, e.g. ring of protection around self, taking self to happy place; physical actions, e.g. closing eyes, biting lip, punching one hand on another” (Ibid. p.26). All this is suggestive of a programme which rather than welcoming emotional knowledge as the basis of insight, understanding, and acceptance, is focused resolutely on transforming the feeling, either internally from one emotional state or another. This is precisely what Hochschild (1983) refers to as ‘emotion work’ – the endeavour to transform emotions into a more socially desirable expression. It is evident from speaking with young people, however, that anger is not actually subject to this form of internalised psychological governance. Rather, when renegade emotions emerge in the wrong space – invariably a classroom – the student is not invited to work on themselves but is asked to leave. The spatial logic of school emotions is as much one of zoning as it is the shaping of emotions to fit the ‘feeling rules’ (Hochschild, 1983) of that space. I suggest here that the disciplining of emotions in school represents a curious combination of strategies that, on the one hand, are reminiscent of well-worn Foucauldian technologies of self-government and the disciplinary power of psychological knowledge (Rose, 1998), but also rely on more absolute exclusions. Sociology of education has drawn widely on Foucault’s (1977) classic text *Discipline and*

Punish to understand the normalising tendencies of schools. Where the SEAL curriculum is invested deeply in the project of disciplinary correction, the application and uptake of SEAL suggests an almost total failure of its technologies to be operationalized. On the contrary, the localised practice of classroom teachers relies on a system of treatment more akin to Foucault's (1977) leper colony, in which diseased persons are removed from society and kept separate so as not to pollute and infect the rest of the population. This was a process of purification. I argue below that in some cases of exile, the purpose was similarly to maintain the classroom as a space of pure reason. While not necessarily 'seen' in policy, the experience of young people's anger in the classroom was one of removal, recovery and re-entry, rather than internal correction.

During interviews and focus groups with young people in the PSHCE group, I asked how teachers respond to displays of anger in the classroom. Repeatedly, pupils describe anger being displaced from the classroom by physical removal. Beyond the SEAL curriculum, emotional management techniques were rarely invoked. Instead, teachers relied on more the traditional practice of dismissing difficult emotions from the classroom. Tim, a year 9 boy explains, "in classes you get sent out to try and, errr, calm down. That's usually what I see happen". Lydia, in year 9, states that students are "definitely not supposed to get angry". While crying might be tolerated, sometimes, "anger, it's yeah, it's more of a bigger issue that people do shy away from I think". When asked what happens when students do get angry or upset, Lydia says, "probably the teacher would just tell you to go outside and take a breather, that kind of thing, you know, come back in when you're are feeling calmed down and ready to continue learning. You know, maybe go outside, go to welfare, get a drink, that kind of thing and you know calm down." In a focus group, Lydia elaborates on this:

"Teachers are all about letting other emotions out but when it comes to things like anger they're a lot more, they don't really know what to say to you about that. They're all like, you should to let your

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emotions out, so do I let my anger out then? And then they're all like, well, hmmm..... they don't give you an answer, because obviously, they don't want you to let your anger out."

Rather than being transformed by some kind of emotional alchemy, anger is more likely to be sent out of the room. In this quote, anger is singled out as an emotion which is different from others. While interventions like circle time and the inclusion of feelings on the curriculum might have created a broadly therapeutic culture in education, emotions are not treated equally. Anger is not invited as part of the sharing ethos. As Black feminist writers like Audre Lorde (1984), and more recently Brittney Cooper (2018), make clear, anger can threaten the status quo, challenge normative hierarchies and empower those whose voice has been stripped of its authority. It is both threatening and potentially subversive, which is why it has been marshalled in the service of social action at key moments in political struggle (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). However, in a classroom context where disciplinary authority is upheld in ways that as adults we often forget, young people exhibiting anger are most likely to be removed and/or quieted.

The following example illustrates both the threat and subjugation of anger as it arises out of a perceived injustice. The story is told by Lydia in an individual interview, and relates to a classroom incident in which she describes an angry conflict:

"I snapped in that PSHE lesson, like, a week ago; and I did it at the teacher as well; and I was really terrified. I was literally shaking as I was doing it. Basically, err, this guy, in joking, he kind of took my leg, and took my shoe off and I tried to like get my leg back, and he ended up taking my shoe and then he gave it to this other guy, who threw it on the floor, and I was like, 'no, it's my shoe!', and I got really angry. Then I picked it up and she [the teacher] was like 'no, leave it!' and then she tried taking it out of my hand, and I yanked it back. I was like 'no! that's my shoe!'.

I asked Lydia what happened next. She replies “I just went and sat down”. The feeling was one of surrender. She had tried to hold on, not just to her shoe, but to her dignity and sense of agency. Not wanting to let the boys humiliate her by removing her shoes and handling her body, she had stood up for herself, marshalling her anger to do so. “Anger”, writes Henderson (2008, p. 35), “is the dominant emotional response to perceptions of injustice”. The removal of shoes may seem like a small and inconsequential event, but it is also one of a countless number of examples of girls’ authority being undermined and their agency over their bodies being mocked and denied in small but cumulatively demeaning ways. The boys in this incident handled her body without consent, removed her shoes forcibly, and then taunted her by throwing them out of her reach. Lydia’s response suggests the feeling of violation. As Stephanie Shields (2002, 141) argues, “[e]motions of violated entitlement are involved any time one believes that a possession has unjustly been taken away”. But, she continues, “it is important to point out that just because you believe yourself to be entitled does not necessarily mean others agree” (*Ibid.*). This is evident in the teacher’s response. Rather than intervene and challenge the boys’ abuse, the teacher’s focus was on subduing the disruptive role of Lydia’s anger. Lydia’s right to anger was denied. Shields (2002) explains this through the lens of gender, suggesting that, while anger itself is not exclusive to masculinity, a sense of entitlement *is*; and anger is the outcome of those entitlements being violated. What we see above in Lydia’s outburst is anger being practiced by the ‘wrong’ person – in this case a teenage girl who is not socially entitled to feel violated because she does not hold those rights in the first place.

In Lydia’s case, her anger was extinguished without the need for breathing techniques or counting, or exclusion. The threat of discipline was enough to snuff it out. Elsewhere, too, there was little evidence of young people implementing the strategies taught to them in the anger management classes. Moreover, some students actively rejected the very notion. Jacob, a year 11 boy, explains in rather mocking terms that he found the anger management lessons pointless and ineffectual. “If I’m angry I don’t think back

to that lesson. If I was really mad at something I wouldn't go 1,2,3,4,5..... it's like they say, it's just a rush of blood to your head. The more you think, the more everything else just goes out your head. It's like tunnel vision". When those moments arose in the classroom, young people did not report being invited to draw on their anger management tools, they were either disciplined or invited to leave.

This is confirmed by, Rachel, a year 9 girl in a joint interview: "when students get angry, depending on how serious it is, they can either get a behaviour report or just be sent out of class". Referring to an incident when she herself became angry and upset, she describes more specifically: "I started crying and they took me out and then they took me to learning support and then they put me in this room with a box of tissues". Students described being sent to Learning Support as if it were a holding tank for emotions not otherwise welcome in the mainstream classroom. This echoes the findings of Lea, Holt and Bowlby (2017) whose study of the way SEAL works to normalise the acquisition of particular emotional conduct at the expense of students with Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties (BSED). They describe observing children with BSED being excluded from circle time because they were unable to conform to benchmark forms of social and emotional expression. Moreover, they also describe special schools struggling to implement the SEAL programme with pupils who had complex emotional experiences. Programmes like SEAL, they argue, result in underscoring emotional difference, producing "pupils as *too* emotionally difficult to participate" (Ibid., p. 113, emphasis in original). Likewise, the Learning Support unit in the school in this study, became a space beyond the classroom where students with dissenting emotions were sent to calm themselves. There were no opportunities to practice calming techniques in the classroom, nor was much 'support' given in the Learning Support Unit. Rather, unwanted emotions were isolated until they quietly dispersed and the restored child could return to the classroom.

Amanda, another year 9 girl, one who has spent a lot of time in the Learning Support Unit, spoke forcefully and, indeed, angrily, about the difficulties of experiencing intense emotions in school. The

teachers I interviewed mentioned her a number of times as someone who had experienced difficulties with peers and had an explosive temperament. In our interview, she came across as both vulnerable and frustrated by the education system and spoke with chaotic energy about her experiences of feeling angry in school. She describes the place of anger in school as irresolvable. There was a period, she says, when she “always used to get angry in class”. The teacher’s response was to send her out of the classroom to Learning Support. From her perspective, however, she did not want to go there, as she describes the staff as unsupportive. Equally, she did not want to remain in the classroom, recognising the potential embarrassment and judgment associated with anger, particularly if it was tearful. For her, there is *no* place where anger can safely exist within the school. If she is experiencing such feelings, she says:

“I won’t take it to learning support, I will go home. That’s my, that’s the only way I can get away from it, if I am in tears or am angry. I will go home. Because I don’t find it safe here. I don’t find a safe place for it here.”

For her there was no place for anger anywhere within the school, either within or beyond the classroom. Nor did she feel compelled to practice anger management skills, as she felt like the teachers had a very narrow repertoire of options to offer. Asked whether she felt that calming techniques were useful and possible to teach, she replied: “I think you can, kind of, try and teach... but you can’t really, like show someone, because everyone has their different ways of reacting to things... one thing doesn’t fit everyone”. She did not like the universalism of the SEAL approach, feeling instead that her emotions were the result of very specific circumstances, and like Lydia she was unwilling to let go of the circumstances that generated the anger in the first place. She recognised that anger was not acceptable in school, and that teachers, “basically want us not to be angry”, but she also felt unable and unwilling to shut that side of her down. The result was that she felt her only option was to remove herself from the school altogether.

Exiles of Anger

Other students describe a zoning of emotional behaviour across the school. While the classroom represents a space of emotional lockdown, the playing fields and corridors provide off-stage spaces for renegade emotions to emerge. In this sense, there is an unevenness to the operation of disciplinary power throughout the school. In Foucault's (2006) terms, the exclusion of abnormal emotions from the classroom is in keeping with the desire to separate off reason from unreason. Classrooms must be kept as pure spaces of reason, where orderly conduct is most forcefully required. Elsewhere across the school campus, there is a tacit understanding that more volatile emotions are less contained. I asked Rachel whether anger was tolerated in the classroom. She replied:

"the teacher will just send them out if they're getting angry.... But, I mean, I think it's more common for them to, for it to not happen in the classroom, because there's a teacher. It'll happen in the corridor, out of the school, on the field, because no one's watching".

Similar to its removal from the classroom, young people were active in the geographical management of anger. Knowing that anger would not be tolerated in the classroom, many students practiced techniques, not of transformation, but of deferral; saving their anger for the less surveilled spaces outside classrooms or beyond the school completely. As Euan describes, "If I was angry during the week, I generally... I generally build it up until I get home and then at the weekend, I'll probably go and punch a tree or something". There is an internalised sanction placed on anger and an injunction that it go somewhere else. Euan is well aware that his standing as a 'good student' is dependent upon this ability to pre-empt anger and save it for the spaces beyond the school boundaries, and he ponders the ways in which he negotiates his rage in ways that undermine any sense that anger is controlled by impulse rather than reason.

Euan: "I keep it in and make sure I don't, I take it out on a tree because I know I'm not going to.....

Me: "So you take it somewhere else?"

Exiles of Anger

Euan: “I just try and take it, take it, just deal with it in a way where it might be aggressive but at least it’s not hurting anyone.”

Me: “But it’s not because of embarrassment?”

Euan: “No, no, it’s just because I don’t want to..... because, I know I’m really angry and I don’t want to endure it sometime in the week....

The performance of anger off-stage, in a back garden, on the playing field or in a Learning Support Unit, confirms it as a dangerous and shameful emotion, unfit for young people and unfit for the school.

Despite the fact that traditional masculinity entitles Euan to anger, his status as a young person and a student, overrides this licence. Moreover, new forms of soft masculinity insist that anger and aggression are cast off in favour of more emotionally attuned behaviour (Anderson, 2011). His teachers confirm this in response to a question about changes in the presentation of masculinity and emotions: “Like, now, young boys don’t get anywhere if they are arrogant and sporty and aggressive. They just get laughed at. It’s all geeks and nerds and Emos, that’s what’s cool.” Euan understands that his emotional capital would be significantly devalued if he showed his temper at school, and so he opts for displacement, shunting his anger from view. In this way, he has performed his teenage masculinity and his student identity in ways that are legible as emotionally intelligent. And there is no place for anger.

Conclusions

“Anger is as much a political matter as a biological one. The decision to get angry has powerful consequences, whether anger is directed toward one’s spouse or one’s government. Spouses and governments know this. They know that anger is ultimately an emphatic message: *Pay attention to me.*”

don't like what you are doing. Restore my pride. You're in my way. Danger. Give me justice" (Tavris, 1982, p. 47, emphasis in original). What, then, are the implications of a system of education in which anger is disallowed? First, there is a risk that, without anger being given clear avenues for expression, young people will lose touch with what it is they are feeling and why they might be feeling it. As Henderson (2008, p. 34) writes, "how, if anger were never to be expressed, [will] its existence be collectively known?" If young people are consistently forbidden from expressing anger, it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the feeling with its expression, and the art of congruence is placed further out of reach. Second, there is a risk of diffusing anger's political potency. By repeatedly removing anger from sanctioned spaces, schools reinforce its shame and stigma and evacuate its political potential. Anger is seen only through the lens of disruption and disobedience rather than for its power to provoke change or challenge injustice. Third, when an individual is either removed, censored or displaced, there is a profound loss of power. This final consequence is worth exploring more carefully.

Like many emotions, anger is often described as *something* which resides within us. Whether it feels like a storm raging through us, or a red mist cloaking our senses, it is described as an object which has power in and over us. When it is reified like this, it is "transformed from a process or abstraction into a concrete material object – we think of it and act on it accordingly." (Tavris, 1982, p.21). Citing the psychologist John Bowlby, Tavris (1982) expands on this, arguing that once we accept emotions as *something* that we 'have' rather than the product of a relational encounter that we coproduce, we avoid seeking to understand what it is that is making us angry. This echoes Bondi's (2005, p.433) caution that if we reify emotions as the object of study, we risk losing the radical potential of taking emotions seriously "as a relational, connective medium". This is precisely what happens when a student is sent out of the room to dry their eyes, calm down, get a drink etc. The conditions or relations that produced their feeling are never acknowledged, and their anger loses power. The origins of the concern are reduced to the angry feeling itself and all the institutional energy is devoted to calming down until there is nothing

left to be angry about. If young people are to challenge injustice and feel empowered to tackle inequalities, learning what Cooper (2018) calls 'eloquent rage' is an important political lesson.

I have argued here that anger is a vital emotion to consider if we are to examine the full range of emotions that organise our geographical experience. Although emotions have entered the education system in new and unprecedented ways via programmes like SEAL, this has not transformed classrooms into the bohemian, expressive spaces that some commentators forecast. On the contrary, emotions have become a target of governance in and of themselves. What is often missed in analyses of emotional education policy, however, are the moments when policies fail and older forms of discipline prevail. I have argued here that rather than invoking productive forms of emotion work, as Hochschild (1983) described, angry outbursts by young people are subject to displacement and containment. They do so in large part because young people's anger is dangerous and disruptive, and threatens the status quo. Rather than allowing anger to be quieted and removed, as geographers interested in emotions we should be paying much closer attention to it.

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